

Scofflaws Beware! Patients Are Protected

Submitted by Jim Rathlesberger, M.P.A., Executive Officer, Board of Podiatric Medicine. BPM is the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) unit that licenses DPMs under the State Medical Practice Act.

April 28, 2006, Sacramento--Government regulation to protect consumers is controversial. This is especially true in professions like podiatric medicine that have elevated themselves to elite levels of respect through peer review and self-regulation. Few want government involved any more than absolutely necessary.

But while some free-market advocates espousing *caveat emptor* might question state licensing itself, most accept that healthcare is one area where regulation is necessary. Each intervention, though, still needs to be thoughtful and appropriate.

The Board Members examine BPM continuously with this in mind, especially in preparing the *Sunset Review Reports* to the Legislature (the current 2006 due date may be postponed to 2008 pursuant to pending legislation).

The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition. 2002.

Caveat emptor

(KAV-ee-aht, KAH-vee-aht EMP-tawr) Latin for “Let the buyer beware.” It means that a customer should be cautious and alert to the possibility of being cheated: “Caveat emptor is the first rule of buying a used car.”

Simultaneously, the Board asks whether our products and services are “Good enough for government work.” And in Sacramento, that can never be an excuse for mediocrity. The question is whether our Medical Board and BPM programs are good enough for Californians.

We are continually working to improve:

- ❑ The Medical Board is working with the Medical Board Monitor.
- ❑ The Department of Consumer Affairs is enhancing use of new technology and customer service.
- ❑ BPM plays an important cutting-edge role in demonstrating that continuing competence, fuller disclosure of public information and privatization of drug/alcohol rehab programs are not threats to good healthcare.

DPMs take pride in BPM’s higher standards, careful licensing and no-nonsense enforcement. Scofflaws get caught early, to the benefit of all.

Licensing Coordinator **Patty Rodriguez** and Enforcement Coordinator **Michelle Mason** have unqualified support in this office and from the Board. Striving to be fair, without overreaching, the organizational culture is to use the system, go by the book, and obey the law as well as enforce it.

More BPM Info

BPM's *Strategic Plan* and Public Outreach Committee chaired by USC Professor Elizabeth Graddy mandate ongoing improvements too. Administrative Coordinator **Kathleen Cook** is upgrading BPM's website in consultation with the Department of Consumer Affairs and Dr. Dan Altchuler of the CPMA Board of Directors.

Check it out: bpm.ca.gov

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